

ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

Regional Growth Fund

A long-term investment partnership to unlock housing, jobs, infrastructure and regional productivity.

Victoria's 48 rural and regional councils are central to the State's long-term prosperity. They support nationally significant agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, renewable energy, freight, food production and critical community services, while providing homes and employment opportunities for more than 1.7 million Victorians.

Yet many regional communities face common barriers to growth. Housing shortages, constrained enabling infrastructure, deteriorating transport networks, fragmented government approvals and limited resources to prepare investment-ready projects continue to restrict private investment and job creation.

The Rural City of Wangaratta is seeking a Victorian Government commitment to establish a Regional Growth Fund as a long-term partnership with rural and regional councils. The Fund would unlock housing, support regional jobs, improve productivity, strengthen regional connectivity and help councils deliver locally identified growth priorities across regional Victoria.

Advocacy Ask

Commit to a $500 million Regional Growth Fund over four years, with a pathway to a $1 billion long-term investment program to unlock housing, jobs and investment across regional Victoria.

What will it achieve?

The Regional Growth Fund would help remove the barriers preventing housing, business investment and job creation across regional communities.

- Unlock housing growth through critical enabling infrastructure ✓
- Support industrial estates, employment precincts and investment opportunities ✓
- Improve freight efficiency, road safety and regional connectivity ✓
- Enable councils to develop business cases and investment-ready projects ✓
- Reduce red tape and improve coordination across government approvals ✓
- Unlock underutilised government land for housing and workforce accommodation ✓
- Leverage private sector investment and improve productivity ✓
- Create sustainable regional jobs and support long-term population growth ✓

Key Figures

$500m Over Four Years	Pathway to **$1b**	**5** Funding Streams: Infrastructure, Jobs, Local Priorities, Roads & Bridges, and Project Development	**48** Regional Councils: Supporting more than **1.7 million Victorians**

The Proposed Funding Scheme

Regional Infrastructure Fund	Regional Jobs & Investment Fund	Putting Locals First Fund	Country Roads & Bridges Fund	Business Case & Project Development Fund
$400m	$150m	$100m	$300m	$50m

How much will it cost?

The Rural City of Wangaratta is seeking a commitment to establish a $1 billion Regional Growth Fund, with flexibility to deliver the program over one or two terms of government.

An initial $500 million commitment over four years would provide certainty for councils, industry and investors while establishing a long-term pipeline of transformational regional projects. A second funding tranche would complete the full $1 billion commitment.

Who will help deliver it?

- **Victorian Government**
- **Rural and regional councils**
- **Regional Development Victoria**
- **Infrastructure providers**
- **Private sector investors**

Broader Reform Package

Regional Business Growth Strategy

Support businesses to expand, invest and employ more people through a reform agenda focused on better government coordination rather than ongoing business subsidies.

The strategy would:

- Remove unnecessary red tape
- Coordinate approvals across the Victorian Government
- Support business expansion and private investment
- Improve investor confidence, regional employment and productivity

Whole-of-Government Coordination

Major regional investment proposals should be supported through a coordinated investor-concierge approach involving planning, transport, water authorities, energy providers, environment agencies, Regional Development Victoria and local government.



Government Land Activation Initiative

Partner with councils to identify surplus or underutilised government land that could support regional housing and workforce needs.

The initiative could unlock land for:

- Worker accommodation
- Affordable housing
- Key worker housing
- Tourism accommodation
- Modular housing developments
- Emergency accommodation